

Review | An die Musik (1961) by Ursula Kroeber Le Guin

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LE GUIN, Ursula K. An die Musik. **The Westerner Humanities Review**, v. XV, n. 3, 1961.

An die Musik by Ursula Kroeber Le Guin was first published in 1961 in The Western Humanities Review (Vol. XV, No. 3). It is a short story, situated in the universe of Orsinia. It is the first story published by Le Guin.

Le Guin's narrative began with the meeting of Otto Egorin and Ladislav Gaye. Egorin, a figure on the European music scene, was visited by Gaye at his residence. Accompanied by his son, Gaye performed four songs and part of a mass, explaining that it took ten years to write.

Egorin carefully analyzed Gaye's work, appreciating and recognizing it as works of the highest quality. However, it questioned the delay in the production of the material. Gaye countered, explaining that his life and responsibilities to his family made it impossible for him to devote himself exclusively to the artistic process.

In response, Egorin proposed a new method. Instead of choosing to write great (and long) works, Gaye should produce short songs. Thus, instead of taking ten years, the time could be reduced to somewhere around months.

The second half of the story dealt with the return of the musician to his home and family. Le Guin discussed family problems, from the relationship with his wife and their children's education. The closing point of the text was with the musician reflecting on his musical creation, and the place of art in a world increasingly taken by machines and the war that was coming.

*An die Musik* is a story that makes use of music as a sign that refers to a much wider art world. It is not just a reflection on musical creation, but on artistic creation in its entirety. Gaye, presenting a work that took ten years to do, demonstrates the artist's persistence in the world in which art has its value questioned daily.

What Egorin calls into question is that art should not try to remain in the ideal and slow sphere. His appeal to the musician is practical advice, because by opting for smaller productions, the artist manages to escape the idealized perfection regime.